

NEWSCAST



An update for members and partners of the new Marine Recreational Information Program

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NOAA Fisheries Funds Improvements to Saltwater Recreational Fishing Data Collection Program

The committee charged with redesigning the nation's saltwater recreational fishing data collection program has approved 16 research projects. NOAA Fisheries Service will support those projects with an investment of \$2.5 million in new funding beginning in January 2008. Project results will form the foundation for the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP), a nationwide saltwater recreational data collection program to be unveiled late in 2008 by NOAA Fisheries Service.

"These projects continue to move us down the road to better information by examining the most critical gaps in our nation's saltwater recreational fishing data collection program," said Dr. John Boreman, chairman of the Executive Steering Committee and Director of NOAA Fisheries Office of Science and Technology.

The approved projects cover a range of topics related to recreational fishing data collection including: 1) a nationwide project to explore new methods of estimating catch and effort; 2) a nationwide project to develop common data standards across all saltwater recreational data collection programs; 3) a regional project to experiment with new ways to count released fish; and 4) a regional project to conduct effort surveys using a list of anglers.

Over 20 proposals were submitted by multi-disciplinary workgroups made up of scientists, fisheries managers, and marine recreational anglers from Alaska to Florida. Proposals were evaluated and ranked by the Operations Team, a group of experts from both inside and outside government. Finally, the Executive Steering Committee, an eight-person team overseeing funding and management for the overall data improvement initiative, approved 16 projects.

In April 2005, the National Research Council released its report, "Review of Recreational Survey Methods," a review of the nation's saltwater recreational data collection program supported by NOAA Fisheries Service. The report provided over 200 recommendations for an improved saltwater recreational data collection program, and challenged NOAA Fisheries to further examine a number of assumptions made by the current program.

Since that time, NOAA Fisheries Service has invested over \$2.5 million to revamp their saltwater recreational fishing data collection program in hopes of providing marine fisheries managers a clearer picture about saltwater recreational fishing. An additional \$3.5 million is included in NOAA Fisheries Service's budget for 2008 of which the majority will go towards research projects aimed at answering the important questions.

The Marine Recreational Information Program initiative brings together NOAA Fisheries, state natural resource agencies, and fishing partners to create a new program that will become the trusted source for saltwater recreational fishing data.

Click <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/mrii/index.html> for full descriptions of all 16 research projects.

New Program, New Identity

The Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) ushers in a new era for the collection, analysis and use of saltwater recreational fishing data. It comes with a fresh new look.

After months of development, a subgroup of the Communications and Education Team unveiled the new visual identity. Like the program it will come to represent, the bold new logo updates traditional elements and incorporates those into a clean and modern design.

The dappled fish design symbolizes the coming together of scientists, managers, and anglers in a collaborative effort to create an improved program. The graphic elements also reflect the program's pledge to provide a clearer picture of saltwater fishing through better data.

More than just raising awareness for MRIP, the new visual identity establishes what the program is all about. A strong brand is more than just a logo. It speaks to the program's core values and products. Simply put, the brand represents our promise to our partners and constituents. The new tagline, "Your trusted source for fishing data" clearly embodies the standard of quality people can expect from MRIP data and service.

To build integrity, it is important that the brand represent a new way of doing business, not the current system. MRIP will eventually serve as the umbrella program for a series of state, regional, and federal catch and effort surveys of private saltwater anglers and for-hire operators. It will be phased in over the next several years as a replacement for the existing Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) which has been around since 1979. You will begin seeing the new MRIP identity on materials associated with the initiative to build the new program.

Initiative Launches Regional Listening Sessions

In the months leading up to the July release of the new Marine Recreational Information Program blueprint, key members of the initiative will be visiting coastal regions to meet with interested parties about ways to improve saltwater recreational fishing data. These listening sessions offer an opportunity for NOAA Fisheries representatives to listen and learn from the Agency's science and management partners about each region's specific data and management needs as well interact with anglers about their important fisheries.

"In order to build a program people trust, we need to understand the complex regional issues faced by anglers, managers, and scientists," said Dr. John Boreman, Director of NOAA Fisheries' Office of Science and Technology. "The best way to learn is by meeting face-to-face and allowing people to discuss concerns, and listen to colleagues and neighbors in an open environment."

Each trip will include meetings with staff from NOAA Fisheries Regional Office and Science Centers, the regional Fishery Management Council, Interstate Marine Fisheries Commission, and the State fish and wildlife department. In addition, there also may be open meetings for interested members of the public to come ask questions and learn more about the initiative to improve data.

Tentative schedule:

- Honolulu, Hawaii, February 4-7, 2008
- St. Pete, Florida, March 17-19, 2008
- Charleston, South Carolina, Mid-March, Dates TBD
- Gloucester, Massachusetts, Early April, Dates TBD
- San Diego, California, Mid-April, Dates TBD
- Seattle, Washington, Mid-April, Dates TBD
- Portland, Oregon, Mid-April, Dates TBD
- Alexandria, Virginia, May 7-8, 2008
- Juneau, Alaska, May or June, Dates TBD

Specific public meeting dates, times, and locations will be available on the Marine Recreational Information Program website.

Upcoming Events

Members of the Executive Steering Committee, teams, and work groups are hitting the road each month to brief partners and constituents about the Marine Recreational Information Program initiative. Below are only a few of the recent briefings.

January Events

National Association of Charterboat Operators Annual Meeting
NOAA's Council Chairs and Executive Directors

February Events

Hawaiian Islands Listening Session
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Meeting

March Events

Fred Hall Fishing Tackle and Boat Show
Somerset Saltwater Fishing Expo
Southeast Region Listening Sessions
Western Pacific Council Meeting
North American Fish & Wildlife Conference

Click <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/mrii/index.html> for a complete schedule of upcoming briefings. If you're interested in inviting a representative of the initiative to provide a briefing to your organization, please contact Forbes Darby.

Newscast updates are e-mailed monthly to NOAA Fisheries, state natural resource agencies, marine fisheries commissions, fishery management councils and members of the sportfishing community with an interest in the initiative to improve saltwater recreational fishing information. For more information, contact Forbes Darby at forbes.darby@noaa.gov or by phone at (301) 713-9501.